

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended): A niobium powder having a nitrogen content of at least about 500 ppm by weight and not more than about 7,000 ppm by weight, and having a mean particle diameter of at least about 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  and less than about 3  $\mu\text{m}$ , which contains as impurity at least one element M selected from the group consisting of iron, nickel, cobalt, silicon, sodium, potassium and magnesium in an amount such that each element M is not more than 100 ppm by weight, and

wherein the niobium powder has a CV value of from 89,600 ~~(CV/g)~~  $\mu\text{FV/g}$  to 194,000 ~~(CV/g)~~  $\mu\text{FV/g}$ .

2. (original): The niobium powder according to claim 1, which has a mean particle diameter of at least about 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  and less than about 2  $\mu\text{m}$ .

3. (original): The niobium powder according to claim 1, which has a nitrogen content of at least about 1,000 ppm by weight and not more than about 3,000 ppm by weight.

4-20. (canceled).